

Appendix table 8-13.

Responses to and mean scores on the Attitude Toward Organized Science Scale, by selected characteristics: 1983–99 (selected years)

	1983	1985	1988	1990	1992	1995	1997	1999
Percent of public								
Agree that “science and technology are making our lives healthier, easier, and more comfortable”	84	86	87	84	85	86	89	90
Agree that “the benefits of science are greater than any harmful effects”	57	68	76	72	73	72	75	75
Disagree that “science makes our way of life change too fast”	50	53	59	60	63	60	61	57
Disagree that “we depend too much on science and not enough on faith”	43	39	43	44	45	44	48	46
Mean ATOSS score								
All adults	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7
Formal education								
Less than high school	1.8	1.8	2.2	1.8	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.0
High school graduate	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.7	2.7
Baccalaureate	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1
Graduate/professional	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3
Science/mathematics education ^a								
Low	NA	NA	NA	2.4	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.4
Middle	NA	NA	NA	2.9	2.7	2.9	2.9	2.8
High	NA	NA	NA	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3
Sex								
Male	2.2	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.9	2.8
Female	2.5	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6
Attentiveness to science or technology ^b								
Attentive public	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.0	3.0
Interested public	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8
Residual public	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4
Sample size	1,631	2,005	2,041	2,033	3,977	2,006	2,000	1,882

ATOSS = Attitude Toward Organized Science Scale; NA = not available

NOTES: Responses are to the following statement: “Now I would like to read you some statements like those you might find in a newspaper or magazine article. For each statement, please tell me if you generally agree or disagree. If you feel especially strongly about a statement, please tell me that you strongly agree or strongly disagree.” The scale is a count of agreement with the first two items and disagreement with the second two items.

^aRespondents were classified as having a “high” level of science/mathematics education if they took nine or more high school and college science/math courses. They were classified as “middle” if they took six to eight such courses, and as “low” if they took five or fewer.

^bTo be classified as attentive to a given policy area, an individual must indicate that he or she is “very interested” in that issue area, report that he or she is “very well informed” about it; and be a regular reader of a daily newspaper or relevant national magazine. Citizens who report that they are “very interested” in an issue area, but who do not think that they are “very well informed” about it, are classified as the “interested public.” All other individuals are classified as members of the “residual public” for that issue area. The attentive public for science and technology combines the attentive public for new scientific discoveries and the attentive public for new inventions and technologies. Any individual who is not attentive to either of those issues but who is a member of the interested public for at least one of those issues is classified as a member of the interested public for science and technology. All other individuals are classified as members of the residual public for science and technology.

SOURCES: National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resource Studies (NSF/SRS), *NSF Survey of Public Attitudes Toward and Understanding of Science and Technology, 1999* (and earlier years). For a complete set of data from the survey, see J.D. Miller and L. Kimmel, *Public Attitudes Toward Science and Technology, 1979–1999, Integrated Codebook* (Chicago: International Center for the Advancement of Scientific Literacy, Chicago Academy of Sciences, 1999); and unpublished tabulations.

See page 8-13 in Volume 1.